Please add the following new claims:

--16. A gene expression system comprising a vector comprising a first promoter inducible by the expression products of an IF gene, a SakK gene and a SakR gene of a lactic acid bacterium, or by a functional analogue of said IF gene expression product, said SakK gene expression product, and/or said SakR gene expression product.

17. The gene expression system of claim 16, wherein said first promoter is inducible by the expression products of an IF gene, a SakK gene and a SakR gene of a lactic acid bacterium.

18. The gene expression system of claim 16, wherein said expression product of an IF gene is a functional analogue of a peptide having a sequence shown in residues 19-37 of SEQ ID NO:3.

19. The gene expression system of claim 17, wherein said expression product of an IF gene has the amino acid sequence of residues 19-37 of SEQ ID NO:3.

20. The gene expression system of claim 16, further comprising a SakK gene and a SakR gene operably linked to a second, constitutive promoter.

21. The gene expression system of claim 16, further comprising a SakK gene and a SakR gene operably linked to a second, inducible promoter.

22. The gene expression system of claim 16, wherein said SakK gene expression product and said SakR gene expression product are activated by said expression product of said IF gene.

23. The gene expression system of claim 16, further comprising a cloned polynucleotide of interest operably linked to said first promoter.

24. The gene expression system of claim 16, wherein said functional analogue is selected from the group consisting of plnA, plnB, plnC, and plnD genes of a lactic acid bacterium.

25. The gene expression system of claim 16, further comprising a second vector comprising a second promoter operatively linked to a SakK gene and a SakR gene.

26. The gene expression system of claim 25, wherein said second promoter is constitutive.

27. The gene expression system of claim 25, wherein said second promoter is inducible.

28. A host cell comprising the gene expression system of claim 16 or 25.

29. The host cell of claim 28 that is a Gram-positive bacterium.

30. The host cell of claim 28 that is a lactic acid bacterium.

31. The host cell of claim 28, wherein said host cell is selected from the group of genera consisting of *Lactobacillus*, *Lactococcus*, and *Pediococcus*.

32. The host cell of claim 28, wherein said host cell is *Lactobacillus sake* or *Lactobacillus plantarum*.

33. The host cell of claim 28, wherein said host cell is *Lactobacillus sake* LTH673 or *Lactobacillus plantarum* C11.

34. A method of producing a protein of interest comprising culturing a host cell comprising the gene expression system of claim 23 in a medium comprising a peptide, wherein said peptide activates said expression products to induce expression of said gene of interest to produce said protein of interest.

35. A method of producing a protein of interest comprising culturing a host cell comprising the gene expression system of claim 20, wherein said vector further comprises a gene of interest operatively linked to said first promoter, in a medium comprising a peptide, wherein said peptide activates said expression products to induce expression of said gene of interest to produce said protein of interest.

36. A method of producing a protein of interest comprising culturing a host cell comprising the gene expression system of

claim 21, wherein said vector further comprises a gene of interest operatively linked to said first promoter, in a medium comprising a peptide, wherein said peptide activates said expression products to induce expression of said gene of interest to produce said protein of interest.

37. A kit for a gene expression system, comprising

a) at least one vector comprising of a promoter, a multiple cloning site, and at least one gene selected from the group consisting of a K gene of a lactic acid bacterium, a R gene of a lactic acid bacterium, an IF gene of a lactic acid bacterium, a T gene of a lactic acid bacterium, an A gene of a lactic acid bacterium, or a functional analogue of said genes,

b) a host strain having a chromosome comprising of at least one gene selected from the group consisting of a K gene of a lactic acid bacterium, a R gene of a lactic acid bacterium, an IF gene of a lactic acid bacterium, a T gene of a lactic acid bacterium, an A gene of a lactic acid bacterium, or a functional analogue of said genes,

c) a peptide that induces expression of a gene of interest when operably linked to said promoter.

38. A peptide that, together with an expression products of a SakK gene and a SakR gene of a lactic acid bacterium, activates transcription of a bacteriocin gene of a lactic acid bacterium, wherein said peptide has the amino acid sequence of residues 19-37 of SEQ ID NO:3, or is a functional analog thereof.

39. A cell comprising a first promoter derived from a lactic acid bacterium and inducible by the expression products of an IF gene, a SakK gene and a SakR gene of a lactic acid bacterium, or by a functional analogue of said IF gene expression product, said SakK gene expression product, and/or said SakR gene expression product and a DNA to be transcribed operably linked to said first promoter wherein said DNA to be transcribed is not identical to a DNA operably linked to said first promoter in the lactic acid bacterium from which said first promoter is derived.

40. The cell of claim 39, wherein said DNA to be transcribed encodes an activity selected from the group consisting of a proteolytic activity, a carbohydrolytic

activity, an autolytic activity, and a vitamin biosynthetic activity.

41. The gene expression system of claim 16, wherein said IF gene, said SakK gene, and said SakR gene are components of a same operon.

42. The gene expression system of claim 16, wherein said IF gene and said SakK gene are components of a same operon.

43. The gene expression system of claim 16, wherein said IF gene and said SakR gene are components of a same operon.--

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 of the present application are cancelled. Claims 16-43 are newly added for consideration by the Examiner. These claims are added to better and more fully describe the present invention. Support for the newly added claims is found in the specification and the original claims of the instant application. No new matter has been inserted into the application.